

# AGENDA ITEM

**MARCH 54-168**  
**Diversity Awards**  
**Reception: Request**  
**for Change of Venue**

**DATE:** February 10, 2009

**TO:** Members, Board of Governors  
Members, Board Committee on Stakeholder Relations

**FROM:** Luis Rodriguez, Chair, Council on Access & Fairness  
Patricia Lee, Director, Office of Legal Services, Access Fairness Programs

**SUBJECT:** Diversity Awards Reception: Request for Change of Venue

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a request to move the presentation of the State Bar Diversity Awards from the State Bar Annual Meeting to the Annual State Bar Diversity Stakeholder Forum as of 2009 and on an ongoing basis. The change in venue would reduce costs and help to preserve the Elimination of Bias Fund. The change in venue would also provide an opportunity to integrate the awards into a larger diversity pipeline event, as well as to expand participation by a wider range of stakeholders.

## BACKGROUND

The Annual Diversity Stakeholder Forum was mandated by the Board of Governors with the creation of the Council on Access & Fairness (COAF) to ensure outreach to and input from the diversity constituencies represented by the former Access & Fairness, as well as other diversity pipeline stakeholders. The constituencies include minority, women, LGBT and older attorneys, and attorneys with disabilities, as well as local, minority and diversity bar associations, law firms, corporate counsel, government and public agencies, public interest agencies, preschool to high school, colleges, universities, law schools, the judiciary and other diversity pipeline stakeholders.

Following last year's Annual Meeting, staff has been engaged in discussions regarding cost containment measures to preserve the Elimination of Bias (EOB) Fund. Staff has also considered ways to maximize stakeholder outreach and involvement with the efficient use of scarce resources. As part of these discussions, the proposal was made to shift the Diversity Awards Reception from the State Bar Annual Meeting to the State Bar Annual Stakeholder Forum. The change in venue would help to realize savings in staff and volunteer travel, catering, meeting space and AV costs. The Forum attracts

more stakeholders than at the Annual Meeting and would be an appropriate State Bar venue to acknowledge exemplary stakeholder diversity efforts.

At its most recent meeting in January 2009, the Council on Access & Fairness was briefed on the proposal to shift the venue for the Awards Reception. The Council supported the proposal to move the Diversity Awards Reception to the Annual Diversity Stakeholder Forum for June 2009 on an ongoing basis.

**FISCAL AND PERSONNEL IMPACT:**

It is anticipated that the change in venue will result in cost savings in staff and volunteer travel, as well as with catering, meeting space and AV costs.

**BOARD BOOK/ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL IMPACT:** None

**RULE AMENDMENTS:** None

**ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN:**

The Diversity Awards Reception and Annual Diversity Stakeholder Forum are aligned with the Stakeholder Relations and Diversity Goals in the State Bar Strategic Plan as follows:

**Goal 4. The State Bar fulfills its mission through effective and supportive relationships with all stakeholders.**

**Strategy 4.1: Develop Relationships with Members, Member Groups and other Stakeholders:** Clearly identify roles and responsibilities of all member groups that form the State Bar of California, including committees, commissions, and other stakeholders that interact with the State Bar . . .to develop supportive collaborative relationships to assist all parts of the organization in successfully fulfilling their roles.

**Strategy 4.2: Court/Bar Collaboration**

Actively encourage and support member participation in bench-bar efforts to improve the administration of justice and access to the legal system for low and moderate income Californians.

**Goal 5. The State Bar is recognized and respected as a contributing and accountable leader in improving the administration of justice and ensuring the rule of law in our civil society.**

**Strategy 5.1: Diversity of Bar Membership**

Encourage individuals of diverse populations to seek and qualify for admission to the practice of law in California, and, once admitted, to remain in active practice

**Strategy 5.5: Participation and Leadership Development**

Encourage increased participation in State Bar activities and identify opportunities to inspire diversity in leadership in all members of the bar.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Council on Access & Fairness recommends that the Board Committee on Stakeholder Relations approves and recommends to the Board of Governors the change of venue for the Diversity Awards Reception from the State Bar Annual Meeting site to the State Bar Annual Diversity Stakeholder Forum for 2009 and on an ongoing basis.

**PROPOSED BOARD COMMITTEE RESOLUTION:**

**RESOLVED**, upon recommendation of the Council on Access & Fairness, the Board Committee on Stakeholder Relations recommends that the Board of Governors approves the change of venue for the Diversity Awards Reception from the State Bar Annual Meeting to the State Bar Annual Diversity Stakeholder Forum for 2009 and on an ongoing basis, or until further action of the Board of Governors.

**PROPOSED BOARD RESOLUTION:**

Should the Board concur with the Board Committee's recommendation, the following resolution would be in order:

**RESOLVED**, upon recommendation of the Board Committee on Stakeholder Relations, the Board of Governors approves the change of venue for the Diversity Awards Reception from the State Bar Annual Meeting to the State Bar Annual Diversity Stakeholder Forum as of 2009 and on an ongoing basis, or until further action of the Board of Governors.